



Consul General's Remarks

Bombing of Darwin Ceremony, Cenotaph February 19, 2008

- His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Mr Tom Pauling QC
- Chief Minister for the Northern Territory, – Mr Paul Henderson
- The Hon. Bronwyn Bishop representing the Hon. Brendan Nelson
- Brig. Krause representing Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston
- CAPT Rixon representing Vice Admiral Russ Shalders
- The Honorable Chief Justice Brian Martin and Mrs. Leigh Martin
- Ms Marion Scrymgour MLA
- The Honorable Delia Lawrie MLA
- Mr Peter Radtke, President Australian-American Association of the Northern Territory
- Darwin family members?

I am honored to be here today representing the United States in solemnly commemorating the 66th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin.

The values we all treasure - liberty, democracy, and freedom from deprivation - have not come without sacrifice. We are deeply indebted to all of those who fought so many years ago to create a better life for us all.

Just recently I had the pleasure of meeting four WWII Veterans who were stationed in and based out of Australia during the war. Listening to their stories of the friendships they made with Australians was an excellent statement of how long and deep our relationship is – their stories of course, included the tragedies of war with friends and loved ones who lost their lives on the battle field.

We gather to honor Australians and Americans alike, who stood side by side and bravely countered the unprovoked, surprise attack on Australian soil perpetrated by the air force of Imperial Japan. For without them and their sacrifice, we would not be enjoying the freedoms we have today.

As so many historians have noted, the bombing of Darwin brought the Second World War to Australia's doorstep – it violently echoed the attack on Pearl Harbor, when, on a Sunday morning only two and a half months earlier, America was awakened to a new dimension of the war that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt described as "A date which will live in infamy."

OPTIONAL:

While it may seem that the bombing of Darwin has faded into the past, and some people would consign it to the pages of history books, I am happy to learn that there are numerous initiatives being launch by Americans and Australians to remind the younger generations that our freedoms have come at a cost. As many of you know Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks have been working in Australia for the past nine months filming a TV mini-series that will tell the story of what happened in "The Pacific" during WWII.

I understand that not too long ago Stokes Hill Wharf played host to much of the Australian Film industry as Baz Luhrmann recreated the bombing of Darwin for the film "Australia".

Like today's commemoration these initiatives are important reminders to our younger generations. I want to mention one other effort, because I think it is an excellent statement of our common bonds and friendship - these World War Two veterans I mentioned earlier, were brought to Australia by the Greatest Generation Foundation. This foundation takes WWII veterans back, at no cost to them, to those areas where they fought the war - some of these veterans still needing some closer and healing after all these years. Although the Greatest Generation Foundation is based in the U.S., it is international in its reach and was actually formed by a dynamic young Australian.

Among the lessons we take from Darwin, and the battles of the Pacific, I believe the most

important lesson is that we must maintain our tradition of standing together to confront aggression and tyranny.

American and Australian soldiers have served together in every major conflict since World War I. While the nature of the challenges to international peace and security has changed over the years, the need for close cooperation with friends and allies in countering them, has not.

Today's Service men and women follow in the footsteps of those generations that have come before them. They uphold the noble traditions of duty, honor and love of country.

These modern campaigns are just as important as those found in the pages of history. The Alliance partners engaged in Afghanistan and

our allied forces in Iraq are working to not only secure our freedoms, but to create an environment where democracy can flourish in regions of the world that have suffered too long under tyrannical rulers.

In the final State of the Union address of his administration on January 28th, President Bush told Congress, "Men and women who are free to determine their own destinies will reject terror and refuse to live in tyranny." President Bush also stated clearly in his address that "Our foreign policy is based on a clear premise: We trust that people, when given the chance, will choose a future of freedom and peace."

As a new generation of American and Australian armed forces confronts the threat of terrorism to the free world, we remember the bonds on which our Alliance is built, the history that our two

countries share. As we work together for peace and prosperity, we draw inspiration from the service, and honor the memory of those who sacrificed so much for the cause of freedom.

May we always take courage from their brave example.

Thank you.